

CARELESS RILEY BUYS THE SUPPER

Continued from page 4.

her hair matches her freckles. Her name's a plain, home cooked article like Matty Kennedy. She's a private character, Matty is. Whenever I see her somethin' deep down in my soul says, 'Own yer own home!' If I came at Matty with a string o' sparkles she'd asked me where I frisked 'em and make me take 'em back."

"You're not hesitating between these two women, are you?" asked Hubert.

"I was—till I talked with you," confessed the crook. "You see, some very important business is callin' me out o' town tonight. The 14th-st. queen would be with me till the money played out; but the biscuit shooter'd require a marriage license and the consent of her mother."

"Ask the biscuit shooter," said Hubert earnestly. "It may be inconvenient, it's always inconvenient, to be decent; but ask her—before you go."

"I know a place Out West, 'way beyond Pennsylvania, where a guy can take up a farm without bein' bothered by Society. She could meet me there and we could get a Gospel referee to start the mill."

"You'd never regret it, Fitzpatrick," said the millionaire. "You and your wife would benefit by the freer, more wholesome surroundings—"

"Yes, I would!" said Riley.

Hubert stirred in his chair and glanced at his watch—Riley appraised the jeweled case with professional eye. It was a quarter to twelve. The burglar rose hastily. There was a westbound train at half-past one, and new pastures were calling him. Carefully he extracted a ten-dollar bill from the jumble of swag in his pocket. He called the waiter and paid his score as Hubert adjusted his fur coat.

"Time's pretty valuable with me," said Riley; "but I don't grudge the hour we've spent here chewin' the tapestry. You've blown me to some good advice on two or three things, Cap'n, and I want to hand you back the change. Drop the Happy Poverty rag when you're talkin' to the bums in this

section. Or if you want the Down and Out Club to agree with you, slip 'em ten dollars apiece first, then say anything you want to. Great wealth may be sinful and demoralizin' like you say; but I bet the roll in my inside pocket that if Whisky Charlie was raised in an Eyetalian-carved mansion like I just told you about he'd get some higher amusement out of his booze than goin' to sleep back of Dan's Place with his head in a coal scuttle."

The rickety cab was waiting outside.

"I hope we've done something toward strengthening the bond of sympathy between our Classes," said the millionaire, smiling, as he held out his hand.

"I kind o' feel there's lots o' things that you and me share together," said the burglar, pressing the clean hand cautiously.

"And there's one thing, Fitzpatrick," said Hubert. "Have you got that string of pearls you thought of giving that actress?"

"Yes, Boss, I still got it," admitted Riley nervously.

"Keep two or three of the pearls and have a modest brooch made for the Other Girl," said Hubert. "Sell the rest and put the money into developing your little farm."

HUBERT leaned from the cab and directed the driver to a well known number on Park-ave. The iron jaw of Careless Riley dropped suddenly as he watched the retreating vehicle.

"Say, Cull," he said at last, tossing a quarter to a loafer who had been standing near, "what address did that swell say to the driver?"

The loafer repeated a well known number on Park-ave.

"Well, Careless," soliloquized the crook as he started off at a brisk pace, "it's me to phone the happy word to Matty Kennedy,—God bless 'er!—then to pull my freight to Padaway Junction. And, say, when that Hubert boy gets home and finds it's his house I've been burglarizing, I bet he lets out a roar that makes the elevated railroad sound like a maiden's prayer!"



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INDEMNITY

Continued from page 7.

and beating their flat breasts in a frenzy whose blindness protected him and the woman at his side. Unconsciously they held hands as they ran.

"Drop behind!" at length she whispered gaspingly.

They were before a house streaming light from every hole and crack of its one-story flimsiness. The mob swept over the porch with awful din. But they were left behind unnoticed. They drew up against the corner of the shanty, panting. Lee gave one curious glance in at the window nearest, then drew back, a shudder running through his frame.

"Don't look!" he entreated.

"I know, it's a wake. They have it sitting in a chair looking on, don't they?" she answered weakly.

"The room is papered with 'Illustrated London News' and pictures of saints," he tried to speak facetiously, "and we arrived with the hired mourners—"

"Come!" she urged. "No one has followed us."

"What about Jack? I shouldn't have left him out there," Lee accused himself.

"Oh, you needn't worry about Jack now," she said proudly. "The word of your danger was like an elixir. It was wonderful!"

"I noticed—"

"He's gone to get the men from the launch as an escort."

They were silent. A memory of the old intimacy with all its shyness came between them.

They made several turns in the noisy narrow streets, passing here and there black figures moving listlessly about, and came quite suddenly upon the Consulate. The bony old servitor was at the door.

LEE dropped the indemnity on the table and turned to look at Vera Carroll.

She was starting the lights, her black envelop thrown aside. The cloud dress clung to her slight figure in crushed folds like a closing morning glory; swirls of the torn fabric followed her in dejected little eddies. Her hair had sagged from its glorious heights to childish disorder.

She drew out a chair for him, unlocked a cabinet, took out a decanter. "I'm afraid there isn't any ice," she said, with her whimsical smile.

Her voice on the deathlike stillness

brought Lee from his thoughts. He reached out and took her by the shoulders, making her look at him.

"I'm not going to say anything about what I owe you and Jack—for tonight—"

"Why, it brought Jack back to himself! We owe you that, you see," she interrupted nervously; but his hands remained.

"No; but you do owe me your faith and trust, Vera," he went on firmly. "For four years—since—well, since you turned my life out of its old course, I've been trying to make myself worth it. I never was worthy of your love—I never could ask for that again—but I meant to live clean and straight to feel good enough to help you—if you ever needed me. And now is my time to demand. You've got to let me take you out of here! You owe it to me, Girl!" But she was gone.

Lee looked ruefully at his empty hands still outstretched. A faint whir sounded on the stairs.

"My God! I believe I shook her!" he groaned. "Now I have done it—brute!"

He wanted to strike out into the night and knock his head against something hard. But automatically he fell to counting the indemnity, stacking it in front of him methodically,—twenties—tens—fives—and even miserable two and a half. It was all there. He thought of how Vera had pressed against him, putting in those last coins.

Then, with drawn face supported between his hands, he sat there grimly reviewing the quick horror of this night. At last the tender thoughts he had so resolutely shut out returned with an invading rush.

"She's safe and sound, thank God! But she risked her life," his thoughts paused, "for me!" He covered his eyes as if that could shut away the hope he felt he could not honestly take.

Dull, regular vibrations of marching feet reached the Consulate, and he sprang to his feet and started forward—and once again he found Vera Carroll waiting there. She was in the white frock, just as before; but now—Her hands fluttered in a gesture of offering something, of giving, of surrender.

Speechless, the man went to her, bent down, and folded her round. Not with words, not even with meeting eyes, did they pledge themselves in this new hour. Presently he moved and let himself kiss her with

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